(d) if so, by when the plastic currency notes will be made available in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Role of middlemen at Inland Container Depot, Tughtaqabad

4319. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the middlemen charge the trader heavily to get routine information in regard to clearance of trade items from the Inland Container Depot, at Tughlaqabad; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to keep middlemen out of Inland Container Depot?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) No case of any middlemen found operating at Inland Container Depot, Tughlaqabad has been noticed.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Rates of interest by NABARD on Farmers' loan

† 4320. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rates of interest have not been brought down on the loans provided to the farmers by NABARD;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines to reduce rates of interest on the loans advanced by the banks;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reasons for violations of Reserve Bank of India's orders by NABARD';

(e) whether Government have conducted any review of the working of the NABARD in order to provide immediate relief to the farmers; and

(0 if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) does not provide loans to farmers directly. It provides refinance facilities to commercial banks, cooperatives and regional rural banks for their onlending to farmers for undertaking agriculture, allied and rural development activities. NABARD has reported that it has recently reduced the rate of interest on refinance in respect of term loans for agriculture and allied activities and some of the non-farm activities as indicated in the Statement *(See* below).

(b) to (d) As per extent guidelines of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the rate of interest of commercial banks for loans upto Rs. 2 lakhs should not exceed their Prime Lending Rate (PLR). Further, in the Monetary and Credit Policy for the year 2002, RBI has announced removal of the minimum lending rate stipulation for co-operative banks. As banks are free to decide their lending rates, the question of violation of RBI instructions by NABARD does not arise.

(e) and (f) The activities of NABARD are monitored by Government on an on-going basis. An in-depth review of its operations is conducted by its Board of Directors comprising amongst others, senior representatives from the Finance, Agriculture and Rural Development Ministries and the RBI. The activities of NABARD are also reviewed by the Central Board of Directors of RBI every year. An annual review of NABARD's activities is also tabled in Parliament along with the annual report of NABARD.

Statement

NABARD's Interest Rates of Refinance for Farm/Non-Farm Sector as on
15 *March* 2002

(%p.a.)

Slab	Minor Irrigation Wasteland Dev. Farm Mechanisation Rural Godowns Agriclinics/ Agribusiness				Others		Rural Housing (All Agencies)	
							Size of loan	Rate of interest
	CB/PCB/ RRBs	SCB/ SCARDBs	CB/PCB/ SCARDBs	SCB/ RRBs	CB/PCB/ RRBs	SCB/ SCARDBs		
I Upto Rs. 25000	7.50	7.00	7.50	7.00	7.50	7.00	Upto Rs. 1 lakh	8.6%
II Rs. 28001- Rs. 2 lakh	7.50	7.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.50	Above Rs. 1 lakh upto Rs. 2 lakh	9.5%
III Above Rs. 2 lakh	7.50	7.50	8.50	8.50	10.00$	10.00	Above Rs. 2 lakh	10.0%